

OREGON WING COMMANDER CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

(from CAPR 35-9 ATTACHMENT 1, dated 4 NOV 2001)

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26 March 2005

1. In your opinion, what are the challenges that the wing must address during the next 4 years? Please list as many as you consider important.

Often, people present challenges as problems or weaknesses. Oregon Wing, like most other wings, needs more of everything: more members, more money, and more resources. However, instead of focusing on needs, the following discussion takes a different approach. I am describing challenges as positive outcomes that we need to achieve.

1. Safety: After every meeting, activity, mission, or operation everyone returns home in the same condition they arrived, safe and healthy. Safety is the first thought everyone has before doing anything.

2. Programs and Missions: We must have engaging programs that meet the needs and interests of our members. These programs must be challenging, fun, exciting, interesting, and rewarding. If we don't engage our members we will continue to lose them. However, active members will bring their friends if they are having fun and doing interesting work. This is how we grow our ranks, and our mission capabilities. Our challenge is to have exciting programs and worthwhile services to perform.

3. Strengthen our units: Units have all our resources and deliver our services; therefore units are where the action is, and need to be as strong as possible. Units in Oregon Wing need to work individually and collectively to train our personnel and provide excellent programs that serve their communities. Units should be able to call on wing staff for advice and help. They should actively engage nearby units in their activities. Units should feel that they are the most important part of CAP. Our challenge is to build strong vibrant units that are fully staffed and equipped to run outstanding programs that meet the CAP requirements and the need of our communities.

4. Service: We should always provide excellent service to our communities and emergency services agencies. We must deliver on all of our promises for people and resources, and be trained, ready, and able to work within their emergency management systems or command structure. We must provide an exciting and interesting cadet program. We must expand our aerospace education program within our membership and outside to the general public. Our challenge is to perform services that fulfill needs in our communities and the desires of our members to serve.

2. What would your strategy be to meet these challenges?

Safety: Accident and loss prevention is our goal. My strategy is to start by running a great safety awareness program in every unit and at every meeting. This awareness program includes short safety briefings at every meeting and safety messages in all of our communications to our members. Making safety messages so prevalent that none of our members can avoid them is the most effective action we can take. Next, we need to become obsessive with maintenance and upkeep of our equipment. We need to keep our facilities safe by correcting anything we find during our regular safety inspections. We need to build a culture in which every member becomes a safety officer with an eye on every member's activities, including their own.

Programs and missions: My strategy will focus on having great programs for our members to participate in. Great programs start with good activity planning. A good plan includes; arranging for qualified and engaging trainers, planning interesting content, providing our members with early and complete event information, and injecting an element of fun. Complete and thorough activity plans result in smooth running activities with high levels of participation. Programs need to target member interests and have variety in content, location, and scheduling. Program materials should be easy to use and effective. Wing HQ can help units provide great programs by providing leadership, know-how, teaching program materials, equipment, expert advice, including event planning training.

Strong Units: My strategy to strengthen our units is to start by building a personal relationship with every unit commander. Communication between units and Wing HQ is also a key strategy. We should use every means to communicate including face to face discussion, phone conversations, written communication, and electronic communications. Wing HQ can help units by providing training for unit staff, holding wing conferences, sponsoring wing-wide training, and conducting professional development programs. The unit commanders' course is a key training event and must be held annually. Commanders' calls should be held regularly to encourage unit commanders to get together, share ideas, and coordinate upcoming activities. Selecting excellent unit commanders and encouraging them to plan for continuity in all staff positions will help strengthen units. Encouraging units to work together will also provide more opportunities for members to be active.

Service: Excellent services are built on skills, reliability, and understanding our customers' needs and values. We deliver excellent services when we speak their language and work within their system. In emergency services, we need to learn the ICS system and NIMS and be able to work in the system like it was our own. We also need to be able to conduct multi-wing and region-wide missions. Practice and training is a starting strategy. Meeting with our customers at all levels and getting to know them is the next. In cadet programs we need to know our cadets, their needs, and the pressures they feel, both in school and at home, and then tailor our programs to fit their needs. In aerospace education, we should learn what challenges teachers face with both federal and state curriculum requirements, their resource needs, and the system that they function within. In short, we need to think more about our customers than we think about ourselves. We need to become selfless and act with respect and give what we have without reservation. When we do, we will be truly appreciated, and we will be asked to help the next time they need us.

3. As wing commander, you establish goals for the wing. Assuming you have a limited budget and an all-volunteer membership, list 10 goals in order of priority that you would propose to accomplish during your first year.

1. Strengthen our safety program by increasing our safety awareness activities and renewing our safety poster contest. This contest awards the member that submits the best original safety poster each quarter.
2. Meet all mission requirements on time and with proper staffing levels.
3. Create a productive atmosphere by encouraging people to have fun while accomplishing our missions and during training. This includes developing ideas that the Wing CAC creates and making them happen.
4. Increase our membership by 5% by recruiting new members into units. Excellent programs and activities are the best recruiting tool. Encourage our member to make personal contact with prospective recruits. Encourage units to have a greeter and a program to welcome prospective members. Engage the media where possible.
5. Retain our existing members by recruiting them throughout the year.
6. Fully staff wing HQ by aggressively seeking help through personal contact between wing staff members and prospective staffers.
7. Conduct a member interest survey so we can better understand our members desires.
8. Build better inter-unit relationships.
9. Revitalize our radio communication capability and participation
10. Continue fund raising for wing needs.

4. Civil Air Patrol consists of members from all walks of life, with a wide range of ages and interests and is dispersed over a large geographical area. As wing commander, what would you do to make the wing more attractive to personnel such that they would maintain their membership and actively support the various missions of Civil Air Patrol?

Everyone who joins CAP comes with some desire to learn or help. We need to understand their desires and capture their energy right from the start. Here is how we can accomplish this:

- 1) Get to know our members as individuals.
- 2) Find the right job for every member and then ask for the help, don't tell them to do it.
- 3) Help them learn what to do.
- 4) Have fun at every meeting.
- 5) Conduct exciting activities and training exercises.
- 6) Help every member advance their skills and capabilities while having fun.

Units that have fun grow in numbers and capability. Units that just do the minimum, stagnate and shrink in membership. Members maintain their membership when they are actively involved in our missions and they feel that their efforts count.

5. The position of wing commander requires a great deal of time and the person must be many things to the membership. In your opinion, what personal qualities must the wing commander possess to be successful?

Successful wing commanders are great leaders. Their members choose to follow them. So what does it take to be a successful leader and to have people want to follow? Wing commanders must embody our core values of integrity, service, respect and excellence in all that they do. Successful wing commanders are approachable, helpful, and supportive, inspiring, and have a positive vision for the future. They are good listeners first, which means that people feel as though they are heard, and their feelings are acknowledged and respected. Leaders earn respect from their followers by being among them, not above them. They act with clear intent and with the members' welfare at heart, not their own. They explain why certain actions are necessary even when the action may not be popular. They also enable others to take action and trust people to do the right things.

All of this takes great communication skills. Listening is the first and most important skill a great leader has. Leaders must be accessible and approachable before they have anyone to listen to. Good commanders consider that everyone's concerns and ideas are important and deserve full attention and action as appropriate. However, leaders cannot take on everyone's problems. They should be good counselors and help members deal with their issues themselves. Leaders show the path forward and encourage their members to take the path.

Great leaders know that leadership is not about their power or their position. They behave in a selfless manner and give power to members. Leaders are just facilitators who help the process along and point the way. A commander's accomplishments are measured in what their wing accomplishes, not in what they did. Great leaders are selfless and give to their followers with no expectation of return. Successful commanders act with the followers first and foremost in their mind. Their own needs are last on the priorities list. Leaders are givers, not takers.

Successful leaders have what it takes to bring the best out of people and to get work accomplished through their efforts. If a wing commander tries to do all the work themselves (micro-manage), then very little will get done. They work to encourage initiative and build an environment where people can excel. They also take time to recognize excellence and celebrate successes. There is no greater pleasure than to stand with a group of people and celebrate what they accomplished rather than what the leader accomplished.

6. As the new wing commander you inherit from your predecessor the wing staff in addition to all the squadron commanders. Some of these people have been in their positions for some time, others are very new to the program, but the majority have been in their position 3- to 5-years. There are a number of vacant slots on the manning chart. What is your personnel management strategy?

Our members (personnel) are the most important part of CAP. My personnel management strategy is to find the best people and help them to be successful. Personal relationships are the key, so I talk with them, face to face if possible. I believe that there

is a right job for everyone. All we need to do is to connect them with the work, provide them training and mentoring, and help them to succeed. I help people to succeed by checking in with them, encouraging the good work they are doing, giving them more direction if needed, pointing them to other resources for help, and making corrections only when absolutely necessary. I don't micro-manage, which means that I do not second guess their decisions or work, and I try not to mess with what they are working on.

Some members want to move up, others don't. I don't force people into areas where they are uncomfortable because they could fail. I like to draw out the quiet ones. I try not to play favorites among people. We are one person deep in most positions. We need backup and understudies. Few people want to do the same job for ever. Cross training provides a way for people to try new jobs while that have a safety net. Cross training also builds on our continuity plan by training replacements. A good personnel strategy looks to the long term as well as immediate needs.

Cadets are the long term for us. I am a former cadet as are many of our more dedicated members. We must provide opportunities for cadets and encourage them to transition to senior membership when the time comes. They should clearly see how they will be the ones to make CAP great in the future, because they are our future.

7. What impact, if any, do you anticipate the job of wing commander will have on you both personally and professionally?

My experience during the last three years as Chief of Staff has given me some appreciation of the work load and responsibilities of the Wing Commander's job. I know the job of wing commander takes time, energy, and attention, while it offers great leadership challenges. Opportunities to help members excel are virtually boundless, and I want to help. The experience I gain from my work in CAP helps in my professional life, and vice versa. I do not see many negative impacts. I can take the time and have the energy needed to be successful.

8. As with any command position, the wing commander has responsibilities and privileges. In your opinion what are the responsibilities and the privileges associated with the wing commander?

Wing Commanders have the responsibilities to assure the safety and well being of every member when they are participating in CAP. Commanders are responsible to conduct our corporation's business with integrity, managing our assets properly, and protecting our property. Commanders are responsible for the proper conduct of our programs and to see that our actions always comply with our regulations and mission requirements. Commanders are responsible and accountable to the region and national commanders for the performance of the wing in all respects. All of this is an awesome responsibility, but can be accomplished because we have great members to help every step of the way.

Wing Commanders have the privilege of leading the members of their wing and participate in leading our cooperation. It is a privilege to recognize unit and member accomplishments with promotions and awards and to present them personally. It is a privilege to represent our organization to the community. Other than this, the wing commander should not have privileges that are not available to other members, including

access to equipment, mission assignments, flying time, or to waive requirements. Wing Commanders should be treated just like any other member when it comes to receiving the personal benefits of our organization.

9. The Civil Air Patrol is the Auxiliary of the United States Air Force. What steps would you take within your wing to continue to build the relation with the Air Force?

We have no US Air Force bases in our Wing. We have two Air National Guard bases. Both of these bases host a CAP unit and both units have excellent relationships with people from the base commander to the gate guards. We should build on these relationships and not interfere in them. As Wing Commander I would learn as much about the details of the existing relationship from our unit commanders and staff. I would ask them to arrange individual meetings with the base commander, key base staff, and our state director with the only goal of creating a face to face relationship. I would discuss ways we can help them. Our relationship can grow if they get more than they give.

Our state director is a key contact for this relationship. He can help us make contacts where we have none and assist in arranging special events. We must keep him involved so that he is not surprised.

We also need to know how Wing HQ can assist in this relationship between the unit and the base. There may be little we can do, but if problems arise, they should know that they can always call me and action will happen. We should treat our hosts with the respect and understanding of their needs and know that they owe us nothing. We are guests and we should be thankful for their assistance. Like any relationship, it only grows fonder with effort. We must always think of them before we think of ourselves and try to understand what makes their world work and how we fit.

In the event that we have interactions in other states we need to go through the same steps outlined above but with the other wings and other bases. This takes even more effort. We must always guard against doing something that messes up the relationship for other people.

The worst thing that can happen is for one of our members to act in an arrogant way. We need to include some humility training in every one of our professional and cadet courses so that our members understand the idea that they are guests and that the US Air Force owes them nothing, not even the time of day. It is a little like having a rich uncle that can cut you off any time he wants.

10. Are you prepared to attend the weeklong Wing Commanders' Course held at Maxwell Air Force Base in February?

Yes. I have heard good reports about the value of this course and I look forward to attending.